Best Management Practices for Commercial Laundries

Following the below best management practices (BMP) for laundry operations is an important component of an overall plan for minimizing sanitary sewer overflows, protecting the downstream treatment plant and the environment.

The purpose of this document is to establish uniform cleaning and maintenance procedures of pretreatment devices by providing guidance to local businesses.

Though the following guidance items may be performed by an independent contractor it is ultimately the responsibility of the facility owner to ensure all guidance items are satisfactorily completed.

Training on best management practices.

Clean lint traps frequently. Cleaning lint traps frequently not only helps protect downstream pipes and treatment systems, but it also helps save energy. Accumulated lint should be composted or bagged and disposed of as solid waste. Management should witness the cleaning every time to ensure all of the lint material is removed and the lint trap put back into service properly. All lint trap cleaning activities should be recorded in a log book for future reference.

Chemical storage and control. Laundry facilities may use a host of chemicals that can be categorized as acids, alkali, oxidizers, solvents or other organics.

Spill control and reporting. Chemical spills at laundry facilities can have disastrous impacts on downstream treatment systems and the environment. Operators should take all precautions to isolate spills from floor drains or other sewer systems. Spills should be cleaned up using nonreactive sorbent materials, which should then be bagged and disposed of safely by alerting the solid waste contractor. Report spills that enter the sewer system immediately so that treatment plant staff may take appropriate action to isolate the wastewater before it enters the treatment plant.

Water conservation and water recycling. Laundry wastewater is low in organic matter and may have high levels of chemicals such as detergents and chlorine. This may make the discharge incompatible with wastewater treatment plants.

Dry cleaning operations and chemical discharge. Dry cleaning solvent, spent filters and lint from dry cleaning operations is hazardous material and should not be disposed of in sewers or solid waste facilities. Dry cleaning operations should use on-site wastewater treatment systems specifically designed for removal, treatment or neutralization of dry cleaning solvents. These systems use solvent/water separators, filters and secondary sorbent materials such as diatomaceous earth to remove remaining solvents.

Client relationships and soiled incoming goods. Laundry owners should work closely with commercial

clients that use shop rags or uniforms that may contain solvents, oil or other chemicals.

Inspection of sewers, septic tanks and sumps. Septic tanks and sumps should be checked regularly for sludge accumulation. Sumps should be cleaned regularly and septic tanks should be desludged when one third full of sludge. Septage from laundry facilities may contain high volumes of chemicals. Floor drains, drip pans and sewer lines should be inspected frequently for corrosion and repaired or replaced as needed.

Good housekeeping practices.

Keep a maintenance log and record all waste and maintenance-related activities. Record lint trap inspection and note the volume of lint removed during service.